

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 4, 2006. Claims 13-16, 18-21, 27-30, and 40-47 are pending, with Claims 13, 18, and 27 in independent form. Claims 45-47 have been added by this Amendment to provide Applicants with a more complete scope of protection. Support for these claims can be found in the specification at least at page 6, lines 6-11 and page 9, line 29 to page 10, line 27. (It is to be understood, of course, that the scopes of these claims are not limited to the details of the embodiments described in the specification, which are referred to for purposes of illustration only.) No other changes to the claims have been made by this Amendment. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 13, 18, and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Rourke (U.S. Patent No. 5,995,721) in view of Barry (U.S. Patent No. 5,596,416). Claims 14, 16, 19, 21, 28, 30, and 40-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Rourke in view of Barry and Hayashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,790,282). Claims 15, 20, and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Rourke in view of Barry, Hayashi, and Miller (U.S. Patent No. 5,731,823). Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 13, 18, and 27, together with the dependent claims, are patentable over the cited references, taken separately or in any proper combination, for at least the following reasons.

Independent Claim 13 requires an image processing method implemented in a printing system. The method includes providing rasterized color separated contone gray level image data (RIP Data). The method also includes changing the RIP Data in accordance with an operator's adjustments, such that the changing of the RIP Data occurs while the printing system is printing a print job, thereby resulting in a corresponding contemporaneous change in an appearance of the print job. Additionally, the method includes subjecting the changed RIP Data to a halftone process to generate halftone rendered data; and outputting the halftone rendered data, or a derivative thereof, for subsequent printing.

A notable feature of Claim 13 is the changing of the RIP Data in accordance with an operator's adjustments such that the changing of the RIP Data occurs while the printing system is printing a print job, thereby resulting in a

corresponding contemporaneous change in an appearance of the print job. Because Claim 13 requires that the changing of the RIP Data occur while the system is printing a print job and also requires that such changing result in a corresponding contemporaneous change in an appearance of the print job, Claim 13 necessarily requires that the changing of the RIP Data occur for a print job that is being printed while the changing occurs. An advantage of this feature is that a user can make adjustments to an image without having to rescan or rerasterize an image or having to stop and restart a print job.

The Office Action indicates, and Applicants agree, that the Rourke Patent does not expressly disclose that the changing of the RIP Data occurs while the printing system is specifically printing a print job. See page 3, middle paragraph of the Office Action. Further, it is Applicants' understanding that the Rourke patent does not disclose that the RIP Data for a print job be changed while the print job is being printed, as required by Claim 13.

To supplement the disclosure lacking in the Rourke patent, the Office Action refers to the Barry patent to allegedly disclose that parsing, RIpping and printing occur in an overlapping manner. See the second-to-last paragraph on page 3 of the Office Action, which cites FIG. 6 and column 10, lines 18-38 of the Barry patent. The Office Action concludes, "Thus, as soon as one page or group of pages is ready to print, the page or group of pages is printed while the page or group of pages to be printed afterwards is in the process of being parsed and RIPped." See the second-to-last paragraph on page 3 of the Office Action, which cites FIG. 6 and column 10, lines 18-38 of the Barry Patent. Assuming, for argument's sake, that this characterization of the Barry Patent is correct, which Applicants do not concede, such characterization still fails to recognize the fact that Claim 13 pertains to changing the RIP Data of a print job while that print job is being printed. To elaborate, even if the Barry Patent were deemed to teach or suggest changing image data of a second print job while a first print job is being printed, Applicants respectfully submit that the Barry patent still would not teach the changing of RIP Data of a print job that is currently being printed, as required by Claim 13. Applicants have not found any teaching or suggestion in the Barry patent that describes changing image data of a print job while that print job is being printed.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the Rourke patent and the Barry patent, alone or in any proper combination, do not teach or suggest changing RIP Data in accordance with an operators adjustments, such that the changing of the RIP Data occurs while the printing system is printing a print job, thereby resulting in a corresponding contemporaneous change in an appearance of the print job, as required by Claim 13. None of the other cited references have been indicated as teaching or suggesting this feature. Accordingly, Claim 13 is submitted to be patentable for at least these reasons.

Independent Claims 18 and 27 include the same or similar features to that described above in connection with Claim 13 and are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. The other claims in this application depend from one of the independent claims discussed above and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual reconsideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested. For example, newly added claims 45-47 specify that the rasterized data referred to in the corresponding independent claims is not subsequently rerasterized prior to printing. In contrast, the editing of rasterized data referred to in the Rourke patent at column 9, lines 46-65, and in particular column 9, lines 55-57, pertains to rasterization of a job into an intermediate format for the purpose of allowing a user to edit the print job. However, based upon Applicants understanding of the Rourke patent, such rasterized data is intermediate data that would subsequently be rerasterized prior to printing, and, therefore, is distinguished from Claims 45-47.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and the allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



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